

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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SCEM-01 EB-03 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7904

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T KUWAIT 3765

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG PFOR KU

SUBJECT: ARAB OIL CONFERENCE INKUWAIT; US RELATIONS WITH
MODERATE ARABS

REF: KUWAIT 3719

SUMMARY: A. ATEEQI WANTED EXPLAIN ONCE AGAIN THAT KUWAIT HAD CALLED
OIL CONFERENCE IN BELIEF IT BETTER FOR ARAB MODERATES TO TAKE
INITIATIVE IN DEALING WITH EXPLOSIVE QUESTION OF USE OF ARAB OIL
AS "WEAPON" THAN ALLOW RADICALS TO RUN WITH BALL. ACTION
REQUESTED:

TO AVOID UNDERMINING CONTINUING EFFORTS OF
MODERATES TO COOL OIL ISSUE, SUGGEST ADVERSE OFFICIAL US COM-
MENT ON KUWAIT OIL CONFERENCE BE AVOIDED OR KEPT TO MINIMUM.

B. MINISTER FINANCE AND OIL ATEEQI ALSO GREATLY CONCERNED
ABOUT OUTLOOK FOR US RELATIONS WITH MODERATE ARABS, AND INDEED
ABOUT LONGEVITY OF MODERATES. HE ASKED FOR US MIDEAST MOVES
THAT WOULD
STRENGTHEN POSITION OF MODERATES. I SAID SEEMED TO

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ME PRESENT US EFFORTS IN MIDEAST ON RIGHT TRACK AND IT WOULD SERVE

ARAB MODERATE INTERESTS TO SUPPORT THEM.

1. MINISTER FINANCE AND OIL ATEEQI PHONED ME AT HOME EVENING OCT 14 AND ASKED ME DROP DOWN TO HIS OFFICE. WE TALKED FOR HOUR AND HALF. HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT UPCOMING OIL CONFERENCE AND US-ARAB RELATIONS AND PRIMARILY, I THINK, WANTED HIS HAND HELD.

2. ATEEQI SAID HE WANTED USG TO HAVE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF REASONS WHY KUWAIT CALLED FOR CONFERENCE (REFTEL). IN GOK JUDGMENT, AREA-WIDE ARAB PRESSURES FOR USE OF ARAB OIL AS "WEAPON" BECOMING IRRESISTABLE, AND MODERATE LEADERSHIP HAD TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. OF COURSE RADICALS WOULD HAVE THEIR STRIDENT SAY DURING CONFERENCE, BUT WITH SAUDI MINFIN AND OIL YAMANI ATTENDING, HE PLUS ATEEQI PLUS REPRESENTATIVES OF LOWER GULF OIL STATES WOULD ENDEAVOR EITHER PRODUCE CONSENSUS FOR RELATIVELY MODERATE ACTION, OR AT LEAST NEUTRALIZE HOTHEADS. ATEEQI INDICATED THAT WHILE THERE OBVIOUSLY SOME RISK THAT THIS SCENARIO WOULD GET OUT OF HAND, IT SAFER THAN LEAVING RADICALS TO GRAB BALL AND RUN WITH IT. HE SAID HE STRONGLY HOPED USG (INCLUDING VOA) WOULD REACT CAUTIOUSLY TO CONFERENCE IN ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

3. I TOLD ATEEQI I HAD ALREADY REPORTED TO WASHINGTON IN THIS VEIN BUT, IN VIEW HIS CONCERNS, I WOULD DO SO AGAIN. SAID I THOUGHT US REACTION WOULD PERFORCE DEPEND ON HOW DRASTIC CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS TURNED OUT TO BE. CALL FOR NATIONALIZATION AND/OR OTHER DRAMATIC ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICAN OIL INTERESTS IN ARAB WORLD, OR STOPPAGE OR DEEP CUTBACKS OF ARAB OIL EXPORTS WOULD INEVITABLY BRING STIFF USG REACTION. ATEEQI NODDED UNDERSTANDING BUT REPEATED THAT HE, WITH YAMANI'S HELP, DID NOT INTEND TO LET CONFERENCE GET OUT OF HAND.

4. REST OF TALK CENTERED ON ATEEQI'S WORRIES ABOUT FUTURE OF US-ARAB RELATIONS AND HIS FRANK CONCERN ABOUT FUTURE OF MODERATE ARAB LEADERSHIP. WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZING US CURRENT MIDEAST POSTURE, AND RECOGNIZING SPECIAL US-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MESSAGE KUWAIT WOULD LIKE GET ACROSS TO USG WAS THAT:

A. IN OCTOBER 1973 ARABS SET NEW COURSE FOR THEMSELVES. THERE WAS NOW A SENSE OF UNITY, OF PURPOSE AND OF REALITY NEVER

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BEFORE EXPERIENCED AMONG ARABS. ARAB DETERMINATION NOT RPT NOT TO RETURN MENTALLY OR GEOGRAPHICALLY TO PRE-OCT 6 WOULD NOT BE SNUFFED OUT BY YET ANOTHER DEFEAT BY ISRAEL, WHICH PERFECTLY POSSIBLE.

B. ARABS HAVE MADE TERRIBLE MISTAKES IN PAST BUT NOW WANT AND MUST HAVE BACK LANDS THAT THEY LOST IN 1967. "IMPOSED" SOLUTION IS ADMITTEDLY NOT ANSWER WHICH IN PART IS WHY WE SHOULD NOT NOW TRY

INFLUENCE COURSE
OF THIS WAR, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

C. ARABS DO NOT WANT TO BE CLIENTS OF ANY GREAT POWER. HOWEVER, KUWAIT ADMITS ITS FEELING OF IDENTITY WITH AMERICAN APPROACH TO ALMOST EVERYTHING, MATERIALLY AND PHILOSOPHICALLY. KUWAIT FEELS THAT ITS RELATIONSHIP TO US IS ALSO "SPECIAL". TO PRESERVE SUCH MUTUALLY IMPORTANT TIES REQUIRES SPECIAL EFFORT - BY BOTH SIDES.

D. KUWAIT LOOKS TO USG TO TAKE POSITION IN MIDEAST THAT ITS ARAB FRIENDS CAN LIVE WITH.

5. I REPLIED US RECIPROCATED ARABS DESIRE FOR FRIENDSHIP 100 PERCENT. I SAID SEEMED TO ME IF ONE STRIPPED OFF SCUM OF FALSE REPORTING IN THIS PART OF WORLD, ARABS WOULD SEE THAT US APPROACH TO MIDEAST PROBLEM WAS ON RIGHT TRACK AND WOULD LEAD TO RESULTS MODERATES WANTED. IT WAS THEREFORE CLEARLY IN MODERATES' INTEREST TO SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS. ADDED I COULD NOT SEE WHY MODERATES LIKE KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA, WITH ALL THEIR FINANCIAL AND OIL LEVERAGE, COULD NOT MORE THAN HOLD THEIR OWN WITH RADICALS WHO, WHATEVER THEY HAD PROVED ON BATTLEFIELD, BADLY NEEDED THEIR SUPPORT NOW AND IN FUTURE. IT WAS QUESTION OF DETERMINING WHERE ONE'S REAL ULTIMATE INTERESTS LAY. UNFORTUNATELY, I SAID, PEOPLE BENT ON DESTRUCTION OFTEN SEEMED TO HAVE UPPER HAND THESE DAYS. SOVIET RESUPPLY OF EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS, IF CONTINUED, WOULD BRING COUNTER US SUPPLY TO ISRAEL. MODERATES SHOULD URGENTLY HELP WORK FOR END TO BOTH THESE INPUTS.

6. ATEEQI SAID HE APPRECIATED CHANCE TO TALK AND REITERATED REQUEST THAT USG TREAD LIGHTLY IN REACTION TO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT COME OUT OF OIL CONFERENCE STARTING IN KUWAIT TOMORROW.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT ADVERSE OFFICIAL US COMMENT ON KUWAIT OIL CONFERENCE BE AVOIDED OR KEPT TO MINIMUM.

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